

REMARKS

Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for reviewing the present application.

A total of 69 claims remain in the present application. The foregoing amendments are presented in response to the Office Action dated July 22, 2010, wherefore reconsideration of this application is requested.

By way of the above-noted amendments, independent claims 1, 50, 52, 53, 57, 70, 110, 111, 158, 162 and 175 have been amended to more clearly define that the first identifier is associated with the connection, the first identifier being allocated to the connection such that it is unique at least among connections to or from the first network address that diverge at the intermediate node. Claims 13-17, 21-23, 82-86, 90-92, 123-127, and 131-133 have been amended to better conform with the respective amended independent claims. Claims 177-205 have been cancelled to avoid redundancy.

Support for the amended independent claims may be found at paragraphs 83-86 of the original specification.

In Applicant's response dated April 30, 2010, dependent claims 71 and 72 were withdrawn as directed to a non-elected group. However, on further review, claims 71 and 72 appear to have been inadvertently omitted from group 1. In particular, claims 71 and 72 depend from claim 70, and define subject matter that parallels claims 2 and 3, which are identified as being within group 1. Accordingly, claims 71 and 72 are re-introduced for examination on the merits in the present application, as properly belonging to claim group 1.

Referring now to the text of the Office Action:

- claims 1-3, 20, 57-60, 70, 110, 111-113, 158, 175, 189, 196-200, 202, 204 and 205 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e), as being unpatentable over the teaching of United States Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0213235(Marshall et al.);
- claims 12-19, 21023, 48-50, 65-66, 81-92, 97, 122-133, 138, 156, 157, 170, 171, 182, 183, 193 and 195 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over the teaching of Marshall et al.; and

- claims 50-53, 57-60, 158 and 162 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

The above-noted rejections are believed to be traversed by way of the following comments.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, Second Paragraph

It is believed that the examiner's objections are addressed by way of the above-noted claim amendments and cancellations.

Favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112 is requested.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) and 103(a)

As noted above, the independent claims have been amended to define that packets are forwarded to a selected output port based on the combination of a network address and an identifier, wherein the identifier is associated with the connection, and is allocated to the connection such that the identifier is unique at least among connections to or from the first network address that diverge at the intermediate node. None of the known prior art appears to teach or fairly suggest this combination of elements.

United States Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0213235(Marshall et al.) teaches methods and systems for classifying packets in a network. According to Marshall et al:

"At Step 1415, the supervisor engine 300 receives the packet at interface logic 360, which places the packet in packet memory 370 and notifies the processor 320 that the packet has been placed in the packet memory 370. The processor 320 accesses the packet through system controller 330 and processes it by applying information contained in the packet to the FIBs in memory 340 to determine (identify) a destination port and forwarding information associated with the packet. Assume the forwarding information includes a VLAN ID and destination port ID associated with the packet." [para 63]

Thus it is clear that, in the system of Marshall et al, the VLAN ID and the destination to which the packet is to be forwarded are determined from the Forwarding Information Bases

(FIBs), based on "information contained in the packet". However, since the VLAN ID is determined at this step, it follows that the VLAN ID is not part of the "information contained in the packet" and furthermore does not appear to be used to determine the destination port. Accordingly, Marshall et al clearly fail to teach or suggest an arrangement in which the output (destination) port is determined based on the combination of a network address and an identifier associated with the connection, as required by the amended independent claims.


Furthermore, Marshall et al. do not appear to teach or suggest any arrangements in which an identifier (the VLAN ID) is allocated to the connection such that the identifier is unique at least among connections to or from the network address that diverge at the intermediate node.

None of the known prior art appears to provide the missing teaching. Accordingly, it is believed that the amended claims clearly distinguish over the cited references.

Favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the claim rejections under 36 U.S.C. § 102 and 103 are therefore requested.

Applicant requests early reconsideration and allowance of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,



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